

March 2023 Speaker Susan Goldenberg

Deadly Triangle, The Famous Architect, His Wife, Their Chauffeur and Murder Most Foul

Our March speaker was UWCNY member, Susan Goldenberg. Susan usually writes the recap of the monthly speaker but this month she switched roles and spoke herself. Susan is an author and historian. She writes for *Canada's History* magazine and does a North York heritage column for the *North York Mirror*. *Deadly Triangle* is Susan's tenth book and her second true crime book. Her other true crime book is *Snatched! The Peculiar Kidnapping of Beer Tycoon John Labatt*.

Susan talked to us about the many years of detailed research that went into writing this book. She showed us many photos of the characters, and locations in the story and explained the difficulty and cost to the author, of adding photos to the book. We saw photos of and learned the story behind the famous Victoria, British Columbia shoreline Provincial Parliament buildings and Empress hotel designed by Francis Rattenbury. A good storyteller, Susan had us laughing at times during her presentation, despite the tragic story.

Deadly Triangle by Susan Goldenberg, reviewed by Ann Thompson

This is a story about a sensational court case that took place in London, England in 1935. A famous, wealthy and upper-class architect, Francis Rattenbury, (who was also well-known for his alcoholism) has divorced his first wife and remarried. His second wife, Alma, is thirty years younger, beautiful and unfaithful. She seduces their young chauffeur, George, who then becomes jealous of Alma's husband Francis. He hits him on the head while asleep and murders him. The ensuing trial had widespread media coverage at the time and sparked debates in Britain over class distinctions.

Reviews of Susan's book

Deadly Triangle is an absolutely absorbing tale. Meticulously researched and methodically told, this true story of adultery and murder captivates early on and makes for a fascinating read. The tragic outcome lingers long after the last page is turned.

Brenda Chapman, Mystery novel author

Goldenberg's style titillates with the skill of a good gossip columnist, armed with the tools of both a criminalist and a historian.

Library Journal: Bart Everts, September 09, 2022

This reviewer liked Susan's more in-depth look at Francis and Alma's characters.

In Rattenbury's case, we are given a glimpse of a man who was both genius and visionary but was also "unscrupulous, a thief, fraudster, cheating husband and a drunk." He married his first wife (Florrie) after getting her pregnant But Rattenbury was a cold-hearted husband at best.

In Alma's case, we see that not only was she "entrancingly beautiful" to whom men "were attracted like moths to a flame," but was also a talented musician, considered a child prodigy who, for the first twenty-five years of her life was a model of good behaviour with no indication she would "go on to become one of the world's most notorious women."

...in "Ghosts," the last chapter of the book.... Through one of Aesop's Fables which is still well-known today, [Susan] states: "'Be careful what you wish for, lest it come true.' Francis wanted Alma, Alma wanted George, George wanted Alma. Result: Deadly Triangle."

The British Columbia Review: Valerie Green January 21, 2023